

Senate Resolution No. 2379

BY: Senator TEDISCO

COMMENDING James R. Peluso posthumously upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate

WHEREAS, Members of the Armed Services from the State of New York who have served so valiantly and honorably in wars in which this country's freedom was at stake, as well as in the preservation of peace in peacetime, deserve a special salute from this Legislative Body; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to commend James R. Peluso posthumously upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate; and

WHEREAS, James R. Peluso, of the City of Mechanicville, New York, will be honored posthumously at the Saratoga County Honor our Deceased Veterans Ceremony on Tuesday, October 20, 2026; and

WHEREAS, The New York State Senate Liberty Medal was established by Resolution and is awarded to individuals who have merited special commendation for exceptional, heroic, or humanitarian acts on behalf of their fellow New Yorkers; and

WHEREAS, James R. Peluso was born on August 13, 1949, to Rocco and Jane; he grew up on Saratoga Avenue and lived his entire life in Mechanicville, graduating from high school in 1967; and

WHEREAS, James R. Peluso entered into the U.S. Army on October 30, 1967, where he served with Company A of the 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment, known as the "Iron Rangers" of the 1st Infantry Division ("Big Red One"); and

WHEREAS, James R. Peluso served in Vietnam from 1968 to 1969; as an Infantry squad leader and platoon sergeant, his unit nicknamed him "Sergeant Ambush" to reflect his countless five-man night ambush patrols that he successfully led in the Iron Triangle; and

WHEREAS, A man of great courage and sacrifice, James R. Peluso was seriously wounded in action twice, first in 1968 and then again in 1969 when he was medically evacuated from Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, For his valuable service in the war, James R. Peluso was awarded the Purple Heart with Oak Leaf Cluster, the National Defense Service Medal, Parachute Badge, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Combat Infantry Badge, and the Good Conduct Medal; and

WHEREAS, Honorably discharged from the U.S. Army on August 22, 1970, James R. Peluso held the rank of Staff Sergeant; and

WHEREAS, After his return from Vietnam, James R. Peluso met his wife of 52 years, Susan, and together they had four children; and

WHEREAS, James R. Peluso served veterans, his community, his family and friends his entire life; he earned his associate degree at Hudson Valley Community College, his bachelor's degree at Marist College, and his master's degree at the SUNY Rockefeller College of Public Affairs & Policy; and

WHEREAS, For over 40 years, James R. Peluso worked assiduously as an advocate for veterans, providing counseling, employment, housing, rehabilitation, and supportive services to veterans and their families; he was appointed by the New York State governor to serve in the position of State Director of the New York State Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, James R. Peluso later served as Program Manager for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care for Homeless Veterans and, after his retirement, was asked to serve as the New York State Director of Operations for SoldierOn; and

WHEREAS, Forever dedicated to making a difference in the lives of countless New Yorkers and Americans, James R. Peluso served as National Vice-President and Legislative Chair for the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs, served on President Clinton's Veterans Roundtable, and served as State Legislative Chair and Board Member of the New York State Council of Vietnam Veterans of America; and

WHEREAS, A lifetime member of Disabled American Veterans, Military Order of the Purple Heart, and the Tri-Council of Vietnam Era Veterans, James R. Peluso served his hometown as past chair of the Mechanicville Council of Veterans, helping assure that Mechanicville veterans were not forgotten; and

WHEREAS, James R. Peluso served as Master of Ceremonies for Memorial Day and Veterans Day observances, helped to organize the re-dedication of Patenaude Park and the Veterans Bridge, and raised funds for the placement of a Monument to Mechanicville Veterans at the Saratoga National Cemetery; and

WHEREAS, James R. Peluso also served his community as a two-term City Council Commissioner of Finance, Chair of the City Civil Service Commission, Treasurer of the Community Development Agency, Board Member of the Mechanicville-Stillwater IDA, and President of the Mechanicville Community Center for 10 years; and

WHEREAS, With a deep passion for serving his community, James R. Peluso was also Co-Chair of the Mechanicville Italian American War Veterans Post No. 21, a member of the American Legion Post No. 91, Past Grand Knight of the Mechanicville Council Knights of Columbus, an Elks member, a past member of the W.B. Neilson Hose Company No. 4 and Mechanicville Fire Department, and a Little League coach; and

WHEREAS, With a life marked by bravery, selfless service to others, and a deep love for his family, friends, fellow veterans, and community,

James R. Peluso died on February 16, 2026; and

WHEREAS, Residents of this great State must never forget the courage with which these men and women served their country, and must recognize that no greater debt is owed than that owed to those who gave their lives for their beloved Nation and to those who continue to be missing in action; and

WHEREAS, Having exhibited his patriotism both at home and abroad, James R. Peluso demonstrated his love for his country and merits forevermore the highest respect of his State and Nation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend James R. Peluso posthumously upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of James R. Peluso.